

FACT SHEET
FOR DISCHARGES FROM
MINERAL MINES, QUARRIES, BORROW PITS AND
CONCRETE AND ASPHALT PLANTS

GENERAL DISCHARGE PERMIT NO. 00MM

GENERAL NPDES PERMIT NO. MDG49

General permits are discharge permits issued for classes of discharges. These discharges are generally the result of a particular operation or treatment process and are very similar in effluent characteristics. Each general permit provides effluent limitations and conditions which the dischargers must meet, and is subject to the same enforcement actions as individual discharge permits. General permits improve the efficiency of the Maryland Department of the Environment in issuing permits to cover certain types of discharges and at the same time provide service to the regulated community by reducing the time necessary to obtain a permit.

State regulations (COMAR 26.08.03) prohibit the discharge of any water in excess of 10,000 gallons per day, as a monthly average, or the discharge of any wastes or wastewaters, regardless of volume, unless authorized by a discharge permit. Discharges from mines quarries, borrow pits and concrete plants can significantly impact surface waters because of sediment in water and runoff from material storage and handling areas. Ready-mix operations can generate sediment-laden and caustic wastewater.

For mineral mines, quarries and borrows pits, this general permit authorizes the discharge of material washing water to surface water or ground water, and of water pumped from mine pits, and storm water runoff to surface water. For concrete plants, it authorizes the discharge of excess feed water, storm water, and equipment and mixer-truck washwater to ground water or surface water. For asphalt plants, it authorizes the discharge of storm water runoff to surface water.

For this permit the definition of a mine includes quarries, borrow pits, and surface mines except for surface coal mines which are covered by a separate general permit.

For mines, in addition to limits on sediment (total suspended solids and settleable solids), this permit limits the pH of process wastewater and mine pit discharges to comply with Federal regulations found in 40 CFR 436.22. The permit includes several total suspended solids limits which are to be applied according to the type of mine and the source of the water. These limits were based on a study of the crushed stone industry conducted by Frontier Technical Associates Inc. for the Environmental Protection Agency.

For ready-mix operations, suspended solids, pH, and oil are limited. The limits are attainable respectively by settling, neutralization, and flotation, methods long used by the industry.

A single settleable solids limit is applied to all crushed stone operations during periods of storm water runoff because it is not practical to contain all runoff for the time it could take for the suspended solids to settle. This settleable solids limit can usually be met after approximately one-hour of settling.

A temperature limit has been included because water present in a pit or depression during the summer can get hot. When discharged to a stream, the thermal shock to aquatic life could be lethal.

Any person who conducts activities which are covered by this General Permit is required to obtain coverage under this General Permit. These individuals must contact the Maryland Department of the Environment at the address listed below and request the Notice of Intent form for the general permit for mineral mines, quarries, borrow pits, and concrete and asphalt plants. Failure to do so may subject these individuals to civil and criminal penalties.

A copy of the entire general permit is available to any person who desires to review the details of its terms and conditions. A copy may be obtained from the Industrial Permits Division, Wastewater Discharge Permit Program, Maryland Department of the Environment, 1800 Washington Blvd., Baltimore, Maryland 21230. The phone number is (410) 537-3323.

